

are surely bearing the same ratio. By parents enjoining, and in some cases forcing, upon their children the thorough acquisition of reading and writing, they exclude them, as it were, from the first (the meanest) category, and place them, at least, in the second. It is an avowed statistical fact, as it is surely a curious psychological problem, that amongst 1,000 journeymen and labourers, there is not one who can read and write well. The social remedy in this case is obvious: if parents do not wish their children to belong to (remain in) the meanest category of wages, they must push them out of the meanest category of abilities.—The charming (!) influence of reading and writing is yet to be adverted to. If the grand total of ill-transgressors of the law in Germany, France, and England, be taken into account, of 1,000 such, upwards of 400 cannot read; 400 can somewhat read; 100 can somewhat read and write; while there are only 50 who can read and write; and only 50 of the more or less educated classes of society. This, surely, is a very striking and telling proportion, informing parents that instruction, as it is a guarantee for higher wages—viz., a guarantee of a human-worthy material life—is also, at the same time, a preventive against the consequences of ignorance;—brutality, sensuality, meanness, schemingness, untrustworthiness, dishonesty, &c. But, as man has “not to live on bread alone,” the arts also claim their share in the beautification (*Beglückung*) of man; the arts, placed now in most countries of Europe within the reach of the poorest. Persons practising any of the branches of art (either professionally or for amusement) are amongst the rarest cases of law-transgressors, while the statistics of the English penal colonies prove that never yet any musician has been convicted and sent thither. How things ultimately will be managed, when all men will be more or less educated, lies beyond the limits of statistical science, being one of retrospective, not prospective, facts. Still, if every one does his duty now, any after-time, being only the sequel of the now, can also be but a cheering one.

THE METROPOLITAN BUILDINGS ACT.

AN article headed “Revision of Buildings Act” having appeared in your journal of the 3rd inst., in which the district of Greenwich is mentioned, I am induced, as the surveyor, to complain of the unfair inference that may be drawn, not by builders in the locality, but by persons who do not know the party who has put his name to the article alluded to. The scale of fees imposed by the Act does not average certainly 10s. per cent., and, in Mr. Parker’s “own experience,” he has met with the most liberal treatment at my hands. It is true I have had to summon him for what he calls “praiseworthy endeavours to evade the Act,” before a magistrate, after warnings repeated, and he has been fined treble fees and a penalty; and although the infliction of the fees was well deserved, I forgave it; the magistrate publicly remarking that my conduct had been “characterised by gentlemanlike forbearance.” The observations on the defective construction of the Buildings Act are now, I believe, patent, and its harassing and perplexing duties on those who have to administer officially to its provisions severely felt. It is certainly doing, in its present form, far more mischief than good, setting people by the ears, and holding up present day legislation to ridicule. There is no reason why a Buildings Act should not be simple: the present Act is certainly the very reverse of simplicity. Returns, notices, arbitrations, requisitions, awards, hearings, certificates, summonses before magistrates, commitments, appeals to Quarter Sessions, and proceedings in the Queen’s Bench—four different Courts of Justice to go to, if any one were indiscreet enough to desire it. I am certain an Act could be constructed that would be at once simple, useful, and practical. The district surveyor should be paid by salary like other officials, the principle involved in fees has long ago been condemned in our courts and in all public offices as vexatious and partial.

The present useless complication and returns produced by the system of fees would perfectly astonish any clear-minded man of business, and the remedy here is also more simple than may be imagined. I do, indeed, Mr. Editor, hope most sincerely, in common justice to every party concerned, that the present Metropolitan Buildings Act may not exist over another session to disgrace the legislation of the country, and I still more anxiously hope that the Bill printed last session may not be its successor. I should indeed pity the public and the district surveyors if it were. What is wanted is, public utility consulted on rational, simple principles, and I pledge myself, after many years of active experience, this can be easily and satisfactorily worked out, and I think the public and the builders should not rest till it is.

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P.S.—Parliament is shortly to meet, and the public should exert themselves.

ARTISTIC AND RAILWAY MEMS. IN IRELAND.

A NEW building intended for the purposes of the harbour commissioners, is about to be erected at Belfast, and the improvement committee of the corporation have approved of a design submitted by their engineer, and have ordered the immediate preparation of the necessary plans, &c., to facilitate the commencement of the works. The style of architecture chosen is Italian. In the centre of the principal front towards the dock, which will be 102 feet in length, is a clock-tower and belfry about 80 feet high. The entrance elevation will face Corporation-square, and have a frontage of 51 feet. Another front will command a view of the “graving docks.” A basement story of fire-proof construction is intended to contain the requisite stores for harbour purposes. On the principal floor will be a large apartment to be used as a general room, and the secretary’s and accountant’s offices will communicate therewith. A private entrance to engineer’s offices, and the various workshops, is provided on the same floor, also apartments for accommodation of police superintendent and other officers. A spacious staircase ascends to first floor, which is occupied by a large room for meetings of rate-payers, electors, &c., also by a board-room and several committee-rooms. The site for the proposed building is on the west side of Clarendon dock, formerly known as Ritchie’s ship-yard.

A new Roman Catholic church is about to be erected at Ardfer, Tralee: the foundations and portion of the superstructure were in progress, but, owing to a deficiency of funds, the works were suspended. A subscription list has been set on foot.

A new barrack entrance and block-house are in course of erection at Athlone. A large number of loop-holes on an improved principle command the approaches. The contract has been taken by Messrs. Cockburn and Son, of Dublin, and the expenditure on the works will exceed 4,000l.

A new church is to be erected at Derryvullan, County Fermanagh, according to the drawings furnished by the architect to the ecclesiastical commissioners, and the primates has subscribed 135l. towards defraying the expenses.

The Lords of the Treasury have granted a loan of 50,000l. to the Londonderry and Enniskillen Railway Company for the extension of their line. The contract from Newtownstewart to Omagh will be advertised immediately.

The Great Southern and Western, and the Midland Great Western Railway Companies have made arrangements for the construction of the electric telegraph on their respective lines.

An exhibition of arts and manufactures is to take place in Cork on the 1st of May, 1852, and remain open to the 15th of July. Immediate steps for the furtherance of the design are being taken by influential parties in the city.

A line of railway, entitled the Ulster and Midland Great Western Junction, is projected, to extend from Armagh to Cavan, connecting the Ulster railway, at the former place, with the Midland Great Western, and forming with the Cavan junction from Mullingar a part of the great line connecting the towns of Belfast and Galway. The capital is 400,000l.

The Royal Dublin Society purpose having model lodging-houses established at Dublin, and a paper descriptive of the general arrangements and details of construction of those erected at Hyde-park by his Royal Highness Prince Albert has been read at a sectional meeting of the society by Mr. Duncan Ferguson, architect.

The directors of the Midland Great Western have decided upon the erection of a fourth story to the extensive Transatlantic Hotel, which is being built in connection with their terminal buildings at Galway. By this arrangement twenty-three additional bed-rooms, two ante-rooms, and five water-closets are provided. The amount of expenditure on hotel will be about 12,000l.

The annual exhibition of the Dublin School of Design was opened during the Christmas recess: the number of specimens far exceeded those of last year, and the spacious sculpture gallery of the Royal Dublin Society was thrown open for their reception. In the architectural department several drawings of merit were contributed. The landscapes and paintings of flowers from nature were very numerous, and many handsome designs for embroidery were exhibited by the female pupils. Prizes have been liberally distributed to the students.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC PROGRESS.

IN a month or two there will be an unbroken range of telegraphic communication from London to the Land’s End. The wires have been completed on the Great Western Railway from Paddington to Slough, and are being carried to the palace at Windsor. In another week they will be finished up to Reading, and some hundreds of men are now employed in running them on between Reading, Bristol, and Exeter, where they will unite with those already in existence between Exeter and Plymouth. It is also intended to establish the telegraph in connexion with this line over the whole of South Wales.—Measures, it is said, are in progress for establishing the submarine telegraphic cable between Dublin and Holyhead. Mr. Jacob Brett has had an interview, it is reported, with the Lord-Lieutenant on the subject.—The Glasgow Exchange directors offered the Electric Telegraph Company 400l. per annum (or 300l., with accommodation for the company, in the Exchange-buildings, equal in value to 100l.) for intelligence, on condition that similar news should not be supplied to any other public subscription-room in Glasgow at less than 300l. per annum. The Telegraph Company was ready to accept of this sum of 400l. for their news, but they declined to accede to the other part of the arrangement. The directors next made an offer of 200l. per annum for the news, leaving the Company unfettered as to others. This offer was also declined. Matters, however, were subsequently arranged, and the electric news will now be supplied to the Exchange.—The *Boston Chronotype* has the following allusion to Morse and his telegraph:—

“The steed call’d Lightning (say the Fates)
Is own’d in the United States:
’Twas Franklin’s hand that caught the horse:
’Twas harnessed by Professor Morse.”

CHESTER ARCHITECTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORIC SOCIETY.—The monthly meeting of this society was held on Monday week, in the City Library. Dr. R. P. Jones was in the chair. Mr. Hicklin, editor of the *Chester Courier*, delivered a lecture on the “History of the Art of Printing,” with illustrations of various kinds, including two compositors and a press, at work on “copy” by the editor, and some curious block-work and bills collected by Mr. Cooke, of the *Morning Post*.